

classification was such that his choice was restricted to a very small number. The prescribed wife was a status-wife. She alone could hold the position of a true "wife." The man might also capture a woman abroad who would be a worker, or work-wife, and she might win the man, so that she became a love-wife.

There would often be a comparison between the children of the status-wife and the children of a work-wife or love-wife, in which the latter would appear the more vigorous. If so, there would be a school in which the advantages of outbreeding would appear as a fact, although not explained.

512. Abomination of incest. The taboos in the mores contain prescriptions as to the allowable consanguinity of spouses. There is a great horror of violating them. This sentiment is met with amongst people who have scarcely any other notion of crime, or of right and wrong. The rules are enforced by death or banishment as penalties of violation. The notion of harm in inbreeding has spread all over the earth. It has come down to ourselves. In the form in which it was held by savage people it was mistaken to such a degree that they might, in spite of it, practice close inbreeding. Our study of the mores teaches us that there must have been, antecedent to this state of the mores in regard to this matter, a long development of interests, folkways, rites, and superstitions.¹ It is believed, not without reason, that the horde life would tend to run into grooves in which the prescribed wife would be a close relative, in the final case a sister. Experience of this might produce the rules of prohibition. The captured wife was also a trophy, and the play of this fact on vanity would always tend to disintegrate the system of endogamy. There are many

reasons why endogamy seems more primitive than exogamy, and it required force of interest, superstition, or vanity to carry a society over from the former to the latter. A calamity might come to reenforce the interest,² but can hardly be postulated to explain a custom so widespread. All the ultimate causes of the law of incest, therefore, lie beyond our investigation. They are open only to conjecture and speculation. The case is very

¹ Durkheim in *UAnnee Sociologique*, I, 59-65.

² Starcke, *Prim. Fam.* > 230.